

Requirements for Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs



Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education
Child Nutrition Programs

Presentation Information

- This presentation provides general guidance regarding the requirements for meal modifications in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs
- Links to relevant resources are indicated in the yellow bar at the bottom of a slide
- For detailed guidance, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage at <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Special-Diets-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>
- For specific questions or additional guidance, please contact the CSDE (see slides 111-112)

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USDA Meal Patterns

- School food authorities (SFAs) that implement the federal school nutrition programs must comply with the USDA's meal patterns for schools
 - Grades K-12
 - Preschool (ages 3-4)
- However, modifications may be needed for children whose disability restricts their diet



Grades K-12: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Preschool: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

School Nutrition Programs Include

- **National School Lunch Program (NSLP)**
- **School Breakfast Program (SBP)**
- **Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP**
- **Special Milk Program (SMP)**
- **Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)**
- **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**
At-risk Supper Program implemented in schools

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/School-Nutrition-Programs>

Meal Modifications

- Federal nondiscrimination laws *require* meal modifications for children with a disability (physical or mental impairment) that restricts their diet
- All meal modifications must be made on a *case-by-case* basis to meet the specific medical condition and dietary needs of each individual child



Meal Modifications

- Meal modifications are *optional* for children without a disability



Federal Nondiscrimination Legislation



Federal Nondiscrimination Legislation

Contain provisions require schools and institutions to make reasonable meal modifications for children whose disability restricts their diet

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the **ADA Amendments Act of 2008**
- USDA Nondiscrimination Regulations (7 CFR 15b)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

- Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any federal government program that receives *federal financial assistance*
- Entities covered include
 - local educational agencies
 - systems of vocational education
 - other school systems



Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- Federal grant program that provides financial assistance to states in the provision of *special education* and related services for eligible children
- Requires each public agency to take steps to ensure children with disabilities have an equal opportunity to benefit from extracurricular services and activities, *including meals*

IDEA

- Any *nutrition-related services* included in a child's individualized education program (IEP) deemed necessary for the child to receive a free appropriate public education *must be provided* at no cost to the child's family
 - LEA may choose to have SFA handle this responsibility
 - LEA may use IDEA funds to cover costs

ADA Amendments Act

- *Expands and clarifies* definition of disability
 - Viewed more broadly
 - Encompasses more impairments that limit a major life activity and require an accommodation

- Clarifies that emphasis is on *providing reasonable modification*
 - Person with disability does *not* have high burden of proving their disability



Definition of Disability (ADA)

- A physical or mental impairment that *substantially limits* one or more *major life activities* of such individual
- A record of such an impairment
- Being regarded as having such an impairment



Definition of Disability (ADA)

ADA Amendments Act

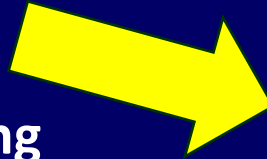
- Revises “substantially limits”
- Includes more “major life activities”



Expanded Definition of Disability

Major life activities

- Caring for one's self
- Performing manual tasks
- Seeing
- Hearing
- Eating
- Sleeping
- Walking
- Standing
- Lifting
- Bending
- Speaking
- Breathing
- Learning
- Reading
- Concentrating
- Thinking
- Communicating
- Working



New category

Major bodily functions

- Immune system
- Normal cell growth
- *Digestive*
- *Bowel*
- *Bladder*
- Neurological
- Brain
- Respiratory
- Circulatory
- Endocrine
- Reproductive

Includes Conditions that are not Life Threatening or Severe

- **A condition could be a disability even if it does not prevent or severely/significantly restrict a major life activity**
- **Individualized assessment (case-by-case basis)**

Example: A child whose digestion is impaired by a food intolerance may be a person with a disability, even if consuming the food does not cause the child severe distress

Disregards Mitigating Measures

- Determination of disability must be made without regard to ameliorative effects of *mitigating measures*
 - mitigating measures = medications, prosthetic devices, assistive devices, or learned behavioral or adaptive neurological modifications that an individual may use to eliminate or reduce the effects of an impairment

Disregards Mitigating Measures

Example: A child may be able to control an allergic reaction by taking medication

Example: A child may be able to control diabetes through insulin and diet

Includes Episodic Disabilities

- Modification is required if an impairment is *episodic or in remission* but substantially limits a major life activity when active
- Examples
 - mental illness
 - multiple sclerosis
 - Crohn's colitis
 - some forms of cancer

May include Temporary Disabilities

- Must consider *duration* (or expected duration) and *extent* to which impairment actually limits a major life activity

Examples

- A child had major oral surgery due to an accident and is unable to consume food for a significant period of time unless the texture is modified
- For several months, a child is on medication that requires avoidance of certain foods

May include Temporary Disabilities

- Modification is required if child's condition is temporary, but severe and lasts for a significant duration
- Must consider *duration* (or expected duration) and *extent* to which impairment actually limits a major life activity
 - Temporary illnesses or injury (cold, flu, minor broken bone) generally do not require reasonable meal modifications

Comparison of Federal Nondiscrimination Laws

Criteria	IDEA	Section 504	ADA Amendments Act
Child has a disability	Yes	Yes	Yes *
Child receives special education (public schools)	Yes	No	No
Meal accommodations required	Yes	Yes	Yes *
Federal funding available	Yes	No	No
* If child's medical condition meets the definition of disability under the ADA Amendments Act			

Comparison of Federal Nondiscrimination Laws

Criteria	IDEA	Section 504	ADA Amendments Act
Plan on file	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individualized Education Program (IEP) Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) May also have Emergency Care Plan (ECP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 504 Plan IHCP May also have ECP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IHCP May also have ECP
Required documentation for meal modification	Medical statement signed by recognized medical authority *	Medical statement signed by recognized medical authority *	Medical statement signed by recognized medical authority

* Medical statement is not required if the child's IEP or Section 504 plan includes the same information required in the medical statement (see slide 43)

CSDE Resource

Summary of Requirements for Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs

Summary of Requirements for Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs

This document summarizes the requirements for meal modifications in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [school nutrition programs](#), which include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Special Milk Program (SMP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-risk Supper Program implemented in schools. The USDA's nondiscrimination regulations ([7 CFR 15b](#)) and regulations for the school nutrition programs ([7 CFR 210.10\(m\)](#) and [7 CFR 220.8\(m\)](#)), require reasonable modifications for children whose disability restricts their diet, based on a written medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority.

Under the [Americans with Disabilities \(ADA\) Amendments Act of 2008](#), most physical and mental impairments will constitute a disability. This includes conditions that impair immune, digestive, neurological, and bowel functions, as well as many others. A physical or mental impairment does not need to be life threatening to constitute a disability. Limiting a major life activity is sufficient. For example, a child whose digestion is impaired by a food intolerance (such as lactose intolerance) may be a person with a disability, regardless of whether consuming the food causes the child severe distress. All disability considerations must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, i.e., specific to the individual medical condition and dietary needs of each child.

School food authorities (SFAs) may choose to make optional modifications (within the USDA's meal patterns) for children whose dietary restrictions do not constitute a disability. Examples of optional modifications include requests related to religious or moral convictions, general health concerns, and personal food preferences, such as a family's preference that their child eats a gluten-free diet or organic foods because they believe it is healthier. For information on the requirements for meal modifications, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) guide, [Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#), and visit the CSDE's [Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Scenario	Determination of disability	Plan on file	Examples of medical conditions ¹	Modification required?	Required documentation	What medical statement must include
Child is determined to have a disability (physical or mental impairment) under Section 504, and the disability restricts the child's diet	Section 504 meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 504 plan and Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) May also have an Emergency Care Plan (ECP) depending on child's medical condition 	Medical conditions that substantially limit a major life activity and affect the child's diet, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> metabolic diseases, such as diabetes or phenylketonuria (PKU) food anaphylaxis (life-threatening food allergy) 	Yes	Medical statement signed by recognized medical authority ^{2,3}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about how the child's physical or mental impairment restricts the child's diet An explanation of what must be done to accommodate the child The food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives, if appropriate

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Disability Discrimination Related to USDA School Meals



Prohibited by 7 CFR 15b.4(b)(1)

- Denying a person with a disability the *opportunity to participate in or benefit from* the recipient's aid, benefit, or services
- Providing a person with a disability an opportunity to participate that is *not equal* to the opportunity provided to others
- Providing a person with a disability an aid, benefit, or service that is *not as effective* as the aid, benefit, or service provided to others
- Providing a person with a disability a *different* aid, benefit, or service, unless doing so is necessary to provide an aid, benefit, or service that is *as effective* as those provided to others

Types of Disability Discrimination *(violation of civil rights laws)*

- Discrimination because of the disability
 - Denying benefits or opportunity to participate
 - Segregating individuals with disabilities
 - Aiding, perpetuating, or contracting with others that discriminate
- Failure to provide a reasonable modification
- Ineffective communication
- Inaccessible facilities



SFAs must ensure that discrimination does not occur

What Constitutes a Disability



What Constitutes a Disability

- Based on *federal nondiscrimination laws* and a recognized medical authority's *diagnosis* of child's medical condition
- *Medical statement* (or Section 504 plan or IEP, if applicable) indicates if child has a physical or mental impairment (disability) that restricts their diet



USDA Nondiscrimination Regulations (7 CFR 15b)

- Prohibit discrimination against children with disabilities in any USDA program or activity



Is Meal Modification Required?

- Can determine if a child requires a meal modification by reviewing *question 10* in section B of the CSDE's *Medical Statement for Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs* form

Section B – Completed by child's recognized medical authority

This section must be completed by the child's physician, physician assistant, doctor of osteopathy, or advanced practice registered nurse (APRN). APRNs include nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse anesthetists who are licensed as APRNs.

10. **Physical or mental impairment:** Does the child have a physical or mental impairment that restricts the child's diet?

☐ No ☐ Yes: Describe how the child's physical or mental impairment restricts the child's diet.

Is Meal Modification Required?

Section B – Completed by child's recognized medical authority

This section must be completed by the child's physician, physician assistant, doctor of osteopathy, or advanced practice registered nurse (APRN). APRNs include nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse anesthetists who are licensed as APRNs.

10. **Physical or mental impairment:** Does the child have a physical or mental impairment that restricts the child's diet?

☐ No

☒ **Yes:** Describe how the child's physical or mental impairment restricts the child's diet.



- If “**Yes,**” school food service **must** make meal modification
- If “**No,**” school food service can **choose**, but is not required, to make meal modification

Examples of Disabilities that May Require Meal Modifications *

- Autism
- Cancer
- Celiac disease
- Cerebral palsy
- Diabetes
- Food allergies (including non-life-threatening)
- Food intolerances, e.g., lactose, gluten
- Heart disease
- Metabolic disorders
- Obesity
- Phenylketonuria (PKU)
- Seizure disorder
- Certain temporary disabilities

* This list is *not all-inclusive* and these conditions *might not require meal modifications for all children* (case-by-case basis)

Disabilities Do Not Include

- General health concerns
- Personal preferences
- Vegetarianism
- Religious or moral convictions



Examples

- Parents prefer a gluten-free diet for their child because they believe it is healthier
- A child does not eat certain foods for religious reasons

Resources for What Constitutes a Disability

- **CSDE Guide: *Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs* (see slide 103)**
- **CSDE Handout: *Guidance and Instructions: Medical Statement for Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs* (see slide 46)**
- **CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 13-17 (see slide 104)**
- **USDA Policy Memos SP 26-2017 and SP 59-2016 (see slide 105)**

Meal Modifications for Children with Disabilities



USDA Requirements for Meal Modifications

General Guideline

Children with disabilities must be able to participate in and receive benefits from programs that are available to children without disabilities



USDA Requirements for Meal Modifications

- USDA requires *reasonable* modifications if a disability restricts the child's diet
- Must be *documented* with a medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority



Definition of Reasonable Modification

A change or alteration in policies, practices, and/or procedures to accommodate a disability that ensures children with disabilities have equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from a program



Definition of Recognized Medical Authority

A state-licensed health care professional who is *authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law* and is recognized by the Connecticut State Department of Public Health

- physicians (MD)
- physician assistants (PA or PAC)
- doctors of osteopathy (DO)
- advanced practice registered nurses (APRN)



SFAs cannot accept medical statements signed by any other individuals

USDA Requirements for Medical Statement



Medical Statement Must Include

- *Information* about child's physical or mental impairment (disability) that is sufficient to allow the SFA to understand how the impairment restricts the child's diet
- An *explanation* of what must be done to accommodate the child's disability
- If appropriate, the *food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives*

Appropriate Medical Statement

- Recommendation: Use the CSDE's form (see slide 45)
- If SFA uses an alternate form, it must contain the *same* information required by USDA (see slide 43)
- To protect children's privacy and confidentiality, the SFA's medical statement *cannot* require a specific diagnosis by name or use the term "disabled" or "disability"

CSDE Resource

Medical Statement for Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs

- English
- Spanish

Medical Statement for Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs

This form applies to requests for meal modifications for children participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs. School nutrition programs include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Special Milk Program (SMP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-risk Supper Program implemented in schools. Schools and institutions are required to make reasonable meal modifications for children whose physical or mental impairment restricts their diet. For guidance on meal modifications and instructions for completing this form, see the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) document, *Guidance and Instructions: Medical Statement for Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs*.

Note: The USDA requires that the medical statement includes: 1) information about the child's physical or mental impairment that is sufficient to allow the school food authority (SFA) to understand how the physical or mental impairment restricts the child's diet; 2) an explanation of what must be done to accommodate the child's disability; and 3) if appropriate, the food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives. **Schools and institutions should not deny or delay a requested meal modification because the medical statement does not provide sufficient information.** When necessary, schools and institutions should work with the child's parent or guardian to obtain the required information.

Section A – Completed by parent or guardian

1. Name of child: _____
2. Birth date: _____
3. Name of parent or guardian: _____
4. Phone number (with area code): _____
5. E-mail address: _____
6. Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
7. In accordance with the provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), I hereby authorize _____
name of child's recognized medical authority
to release such protected health information of my child as is necessary for the specific purpose of special diet information to _____
name of school district and I consent to allow the recognized medical authority to freely exchange the information listed on this form and in my child's records with the school district as necessary. I understand that I may refuse to sign this authorization without impact on the eligibility of my request for a special diet for my child. I understand that I may rescind permission to release this information at any time, except when the information has already been released.
8. Signature of parent or guardian: _____
9. Date: _____

Section B – Completed by child's recognized medical authority

This section must be completed by the child's physician, physician assistant, doctor of osteopathy, or advanced practice registered nurse (APRN). APRNs include nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse anesthetists who are licensed as APRNs.

10. **Physical or mental impairment:** Does the child have a physical or mental impairment that restricts the child's diet?
☐ No ☐ Yes: Describe how the child's physical or mental impairment restricts the child's diet.
11. **Diet plan:** Explain the meal modification for the child. Attach a specific diet plan, if needed.

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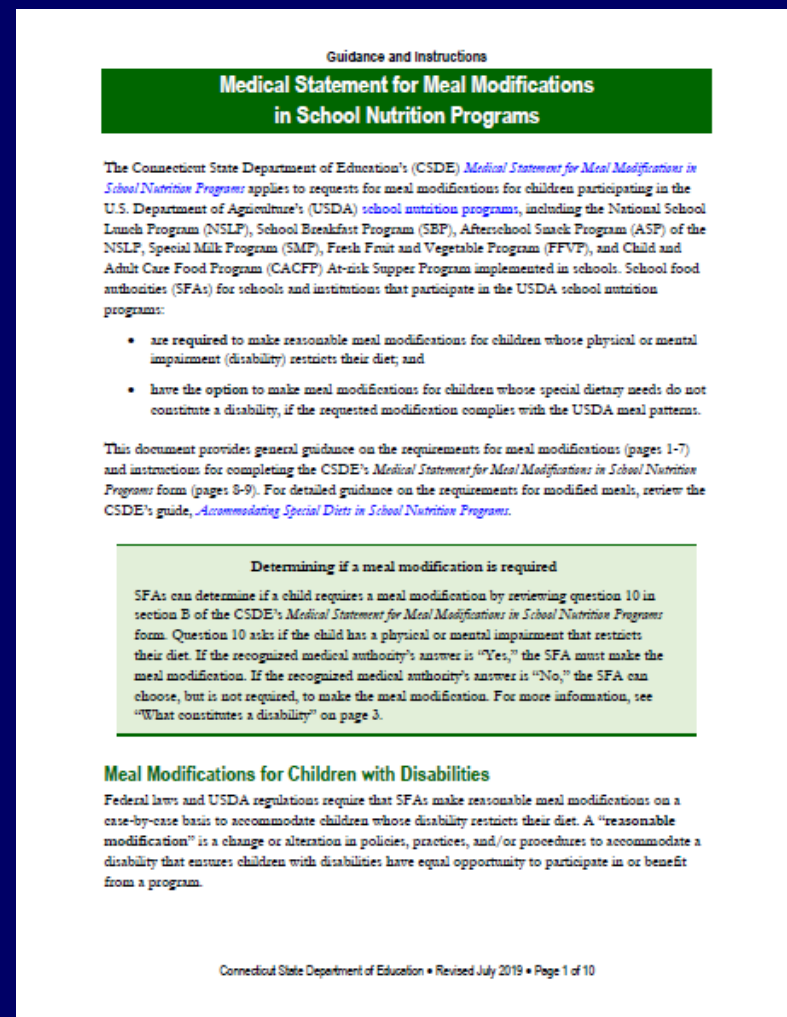
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/SpecDiet/MedicalStatementSNP.pdf>

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/SpecDiet/MedicalStatementSNP_Spanish.pdf

CSDE Resource

Guidance and Instructions: Medical Statement for Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs

- English
- Spanish



<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/SpecDiet/MedicalStatementSNPinstr.pdf>

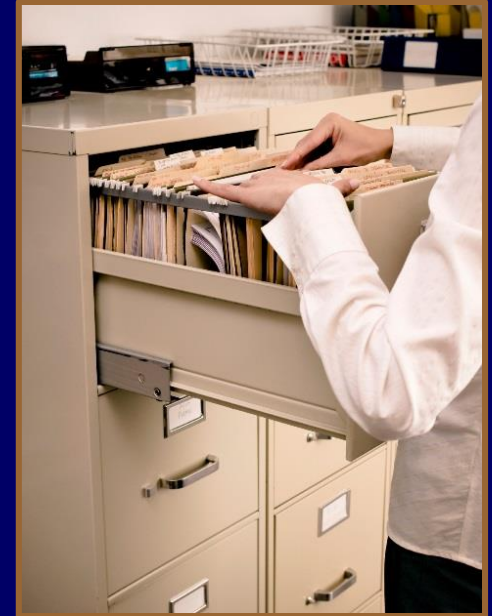
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/SpecDiet/MedicalStatementSNPinstr_Spanish.pdf

Handling Missing Information

- SFA *cannot deny or delay* a requested meal modification with insufficient information
 - Must obtain appropriate clarification
 - Must work with parent/guardian to obtain amended medical statement
- While obtaining additional information, SFA must follow the *portion of the medical statement that is clear and unambiguous* to greatest extent possible

Updates to Medical Statements

- Changes to diet orders must be in *writing* on a medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority
- Schools should *develop a plan* for ensuring that dietary information on file is current
- USDA recommends that SFAs maintain documentation when *ending* a meal accommodation



Good Communication is Important

- USDA encourages *inclusive team approach* to provide appropriate meal modifications
 - school nurse and other medical personnel
 - school food service personnel
 - school administrators
 - parents/guardians
 - children (when age appropriate)
 - other school officials with relevant experience, e.g., school dietitians



Good Communication is Important

- *Establish procedures* for identifying children with special dietary needs and providing applicable information to school food service personnel
 - Share copies of medical statements with school food service personnel, as appropriate



Sharing of Medical Statements

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows sharing of confidential student information when there is a *legitimate educational interest*, such as making meal modifications for special dietary needs



SFA's Obligations for Reasonable Meal Modifications



SFA's Obligations for Reasonable Meal Modifications

General Guideline

SFA must offer a *medically appropriate* and *reasonable* modification that effectively *accommodates* the child's disability and provides *equal opportunity* to participate in or benefit from the school nutrition program



SFA's Obligations for Reasonable Meal Modifications

- Modification must be *related to disability* based on child's medical statement
- Must assess each request on a *case-by-case basis* to determine appropriate modification
- Can consider *cost, efficiency, and age* of child

General Guideline: SFA must offer a medically appropriate and reasonable modification that effectively accommodates the child's disability and provides equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from the school nutrition program

Food Substitutions

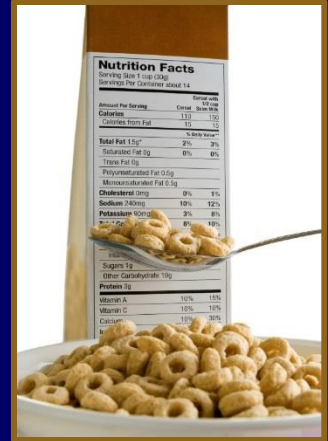
- Not required to provide the *same* meal
- Not required to provide a *specific number* of alternate meals
- Generally not required to provide a *specific brand of food*, unless medically necessary



General Guideline: SFA must offer a medically appropriate and reasonable modification that effectively accommodates the child's disability and provides equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from the school nutrition program

Nutrition Information

- SFA must make *nutrition information for school meals available* to students, families, school nurses, and others as needed
 - Not required for *all* meals
 - **Best Practice:** Develop *cycle menus* for common special diets, e.g., five-day gluten-free diet cycle menu or two-week cycle menu for a specific food allergy
 - ▶ Check with parents/guardians to ensure cycle menu meet their child's specific dietary requirements



Texture Modifications

- Meals modified for texture (chopped, ground or pureed) consist only of *regular menu items*, unless otherwise specified
- Medical statement not required
 - However, CSDE recommends medical statement to ensure clear communication between parents/guardians and school staff about appropriate meal modifications



Meal Services Outside USDA Programs

- SFA not required to provide meal services, special foods, or supplements to children with disabilities when the meal service is *not normally available for the general student body*
- There are two exceptions



Meal Services Outside USDA Programs

Two Exceptions

- If child's IEP includes a meal that the local educational agency (LEA) does not provide, or special foods or nutrition supplements outside of the normal school meal periods, the *LEA's administration* is responsible for providing them and allocating the cost of making these accommodations
- If child resides in a *residential child care institution (RCCI)*, the RCCI must provide the required meal service in the child's medical statement or IEP

Example: Meal Services Outside USDA Programs



A school participates in the NSLP and SBP. The medical statement for a child with a disability requires 6 cans of a nutrition supplement during the school day. Is the SFA required to provide and pay for all 6 servings?

Example: Meal Services Outside USDA Programs



A school participates in the NSLP and SBP. The medical statement for a child with a disability requires 6 cans of a nutrition supplement during the school day. Is the SFA required to provide and pay for all 6 servings?



Depends on whether child has IEP

Example: Meal Services Outside USDA Programs



Meal	Is supplement required?	
	No IEP	IEP
Breakfast (SBP): 2 cans	Yes	
AM Snack: 1 can	No	
Lunch (NSLP): 2 cans	Yes	
PM Snack: 1 can	No	

Example: Meal Services Outside USDA Programs



Meal	Is supplement required?	
	No IEP	IEP
Breakfast (SBP): 2 cans	Yes	Yes
AM Snack: 1 can	No	Yes*
Lunch (NSLP): 2 cans	Yes	Yes
PM Snack: 1 can	No	Yes*
* LEA <i>must</i> provide and may <i>choose</i> to have SFA cover cost		

SFA versus LEA Responsibility

SFA (food service)	LEA (district/governing authority)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Responsible for providing the necessary <i>meal modifications</i> for children participating in school nutrition programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ <i>Overall responsibility</i> for accommodating children with disabilities■ May have additional obligations under federal law, beyond the scope of USDA guidance



Identifying Students



Identifying Students

- LEA's policies and practices must
 - *protect the privacy* of children who have a disability
 - *maintain the confidentiality* of each child's medical condition
- *Cannot outwardly identify children* whose disability requires a meal modification

Identifying Students

Unacceptable practices

- Posting lists of students' dietary needs in public dietary areas, e.g., a list of students with food allergies
- Asking students or their parents/guardians to consent to a physical designation, such as wearing a lanyard, bracelet, pin, sticker, or similar item

Identifying Students

Acceptable practices

- Point-of-sales (POS) cash register system
- Different colored plates or trays to identify meals that meet specific dietary criteria
- Colored tags or labels, placards, or similar signage near each food item on the serving line to identify each food item's dietary criteria

Identifying Students

Acceptable practices

- Providing regular staff updates for each child whose disability requires a meal modification
- Posting information about meal modifications in locations that are *only visible to school food service staff*, such as in the kitchen and behind counters and serving lines

Identifying Students

Acceptable practices

- Providing ongoing communication with parents/guardians to explain the district's procedures for meal modifications, menus, and how the cafeteria ensures allergen-free meals
- Use a variety of communication methods, such as the district's website, parent handbooks, newsletters, e-mails, handouts, menu backs, bulletin boards and displays, meetings, and parent events

Appropriate Eating Areas



Appropriate Eating Areas

- Must accommodate children with disabilities in *least restrictive* and *most integrated* setting
 - Children with disabilities must participate with children without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate
- Ensure food service areas are *accessible*
- Provide *auxiliary aids and services*, if needed
 - food service aides
 - adaptive feeding equipment
 - meal tracking assistance
 - other effective methods

Appropriate Eating Areas

- Separate table for children with certain special needs may be appropriate under some circumstances
 - Must always be based on what is appropriate to *meet children's needs*
 - Cannot segregate as a matter of convenience or for disciplinary reasons



Example: Appropriate Eating Areas



A child requires a large degree of assistance from an aide in order to consume her meals. During the meal service, is it appropriate for the child and the aide to be at a separate table that has more space?

Yes

If this is in the best interest of meeting the child's needs

Example: Appropriate Eating Areas



A school designates a separate table in the cafeteria where children with severe food allergies can safely consume their meals. Is this an appropriate practice?

Yes

- If this is in best interest of meeting each child's needs
- Must be cleaned according to food safety guidelines to eliminate possible cross-contact of allergens on tables and seating

Example: Appropriate Eating Areas



A school designates an area away from the cafeteria where children with severe food allergies can safely consume their meals. Is this an appropriate practice?

Yes

- If this is in best interest of meeting each child's needs
- Must be cleaned according to food safety guidelines to eliminate possible cross-contact of allergens on tables and seating

Separate Eating Areas for Food Allergies

- School should determine if special seating arrangement is *truly necessary*
 - Get input from child's parent/guardian and recognized medical authority
- *Allow other children to join* children with food allergies, provided they do not bring any foods that are potentially dangerous to those children

Food Bans

- Universal exclusion of specific foods (or food groups) is *not USDA policy*
 - Could be appropriate depending on local circumstances
- If a school enacts a universal ban, the specific allergen must *never be present in the school*
 - Students and parents/guardians will assume the school is a safe place based on the stated ban



Food Service Contracts



Food Service Contracts

- Federal regulations specifically prohibit disability discrimination through contracts
- Must make reasonable modifications for children with disabilities, regardless of whether the LEA
 - operates the food service
 - contracts with a food service management company (FSMC)
 - purchases vended meals



Food Service Contracts

- As applicable, LEAs *must address modifications for children with disabilities* in any contracts with a vendor or FSMC
- LEAs must make certain the vendor or FSMC is aware that meal modifications may be required during the term of the contract

Food Service Contracts

- Review USDA Memo SP 40-2016, CACFP 12-2016 and SFSP 14-2016, *Updated Guidance: Contracting with Food Service Management Companies*



<https://www.fns.usda.gov/updated-guidance-contracting-food-service-management>

Procedural Safeguards



Procedural Safeguards

See page 6 of CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 13-17

- LEAs must establish a procedural safeguards process that provides *notice and information* to parents/guardians regarding
 - how to request a reasonable meal modification
 - their procedural rights for grievance procedures

Procedural Safeguards

- LEAs must work with school food service personnel to implement procedures for parents/guardians to request meal modifications for children with disabilities and to resolve grievances
 - May meet this requirement by using *existing procedures* to address requests to accommodate students with disabilities in the classroom, in compliance with Section 504 or the IDEA

Procedural Safeguards

- At a minimum, the LEA must
 - *notify parents/guardians* of the process for requesting meal modifications to accommodate a child's disability
 - arrange for an *impartial hearing process* to resolve grievances related to requests for meal modifications based on a disability

Procedural Safeguards

- LEAs employing at least 15 individuals must ensure their procedural safeguards process provides for a *prompt and equitable resolution of grievances*, and must *designate at least one person* to coordinate compliance with disability requirements
 - often referred to as the Section 504 Coordinator



Do you know your Section 504 Coordinator?

Section 504 Coordinator

- In many cases, the Section 504 Coordinator is responsible for *addressing requests for accommodations in the school in general*
- May also be responsible for ensuring compliance with disability requirements related to meals and the meal service

Section 504 Coordinator

- LEAs are not required to have a separate 504 Coordinator who is only responsible for meal modifications
- LEAs should ensure that school food service personnel *understand the procedures* for handling requests for meal modifications and *know how to contact the Section 504 Coordinator*

CSDE Resource

Requirements for Procedural Safeguards for Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs

Requirements for Procedural Safeguards for Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs

Under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), procedural safeguards protect the rights of parents and their child with a disability, and provide families and school systems with processes to resolve disputes. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires that local educational agencies (LEAs) include procedural safeguards for meal modifications to accommodate a child's disability in the [school nutrition programs](#). These requirements are part of the USDA's nondiscrimination regulations and civil rights protections. The USDA's school nutrition programs include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Special Milk Program (SMP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-risk Supper Program implemented in schools.

School food authorities (SFAs) must work with their LEA's 504 Coordinator to ensure that the LEA's procedural safeguards process includes the provisions required by the USDA's nondiscrimination regulations (7 CFR 15b). LEAs must establish a process for procedural safeguards that provides notice and information to parents and guardians regarding how to request a reasonable modification and their procedural rights for grievance procedures.

Requirements for Meal Modifications for Children with Disabilities

The USDA's nondiscrimination regulations (7 CFR 15b) and regulations for school nutrition programs (7 CFR 210.10(m) and 7 CFR 220.8(m)) require that SFAs make reasonable modifications on a case-by-case basis for children whose disability restricts their diet, when a recognized medical authority certifies the need. The USDA defines a "reasonable modification" as a change or alteration in policies, practices, and/or procedures to accommodate a disability that ensures children with disabilities have equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from a program. The general guideline in making accommodations is that children with disabilities must be able to participate in and receive benefits from programs that are available to children without disabilities.

Meal modifications must be related to the disability or limitations caused by the disability, and require a medical statement from a state-licensed healthcare professional who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law. The Connecticut State Department of Public Health (DPH) defines recognized medical authorities as physicians, physician assistants, doctors of osteopathy, and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), i.e., nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse anesthetists who are licensed as APRNs. For detailed guidance on the requirements for meal modifications in the school nutrition programs, review the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the CSDE's [Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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Meal Modifications for Children without Disabilities



Meal Modifications for Children without Disabilities

- **Optional**
- **Must always comply with the USDA meal patterns**
- **Medical statement not required**
 - **CSDE recommends medical statement to ensure clear communication between parents/guardians and school staff about appropriate meal modifications**



Milk Substitutes for Children *without* Disabilities (Grades K-12)

- USDA meal patterns require a serving of milk, which must be low-fat (1%) or fat-free (unflavored or flavored)
- SFAs may choose to offer one or more *allowable milk substitutes* including
 - low-fat (1%) or fat-free lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk
 - a nondairy beverage that meets the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes



Milk Substitutes for Children *without* Disabilities (Preschoolers)

- USDA meal patterns require a serving of milk, which must be whole unflavored milk for age 1, and unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free milk for ages 3-4
- SFAs may choose to offer one or more *allowable milk substitutes* including
 - lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk (meet fat requirements for appropriate age group)
 - a nondairy beverage that meets the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes

Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities

- *Without a disability,*
cannot offer juice,
water, or any other
beverages as a
substitute for milk,
even if specified on a
medical statement



Summary of Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children with and without a Disability

Beverage	Allowable substitute?	
	Disability	No disability
Juice	Yes *	No
Water	Yes *	No
Nondairy milk substitute that does not meet USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes, such as almond milk, rice milk, and cashew milk	Yes *	Yes
* If specified by the recognized medical authority in the child's medical statement		

Summary of Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children with and without a Disability

Beverage	Allowable substitute?	
	Disability	No disability
Nutrition supplement beverages, such as Abbott's Pediasure	Yes *	No
Powdered milk beverages such as Nestle's NIDO	Yes *	No
* If specified by the recognized medical authority in the child's medical statement		

CSDE Resource

Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs

Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs

The requirements in this document apply only to milk substitutes for children whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability. Meal modifications for children whose disability restricts their diet must follow the federal nondiscrimination laws and regulations. For more information, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs*.



Public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs must follow the USDA's requirements for milk substitutes for children without disabilities. School nutrition programs include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Special Milk Program (SMP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-risk Supper Program implemented in schools.

School food authorities (SFAs) have the **option** to offer one or more allowable fluid milk substitutes for children without disabilities. If the SFA chooses to make allowable milk substitutes available, they must be available for all children when requested by a parent or guardian. The USDA does not provide additional reimbursement for these substitutions.

Allowable Milk Substitutes

SFAs may choose to offer one or more allowable milk substitutes for children whose dietary needs do not constitute a disability. The two types of allowable substitutes include:

- lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk with the appropriate fat content for each grade group, i.e., low-fat milk (unflavored or flavored) and fat-free milk (unflavored or flavored) for grades K-12; whole unflavored milk for age 1; and unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk for ages 2-4; and
- nondairy milk substitutes that meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes (see table 1) and the state beverage requirements of C.G.S. Section 10-221q, such as certain brands of soy milk.

The USDA recommends that lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk is the first choice for children with lactose intolerance. SFAs may choose to offer only one milk substitute, such as lactose-free low-fat unflavored milk. If children decide not to take this option, the SFA is not obligated to offer any other milk



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Summary of USDA Requirements



Summary of USDA Requirements for Meal Modifications

Criteria	Disability	No disability
Meal modification	Required *	Optional
Medical statement signed by recognized medical authority	Required (unless the same information is in child's IEP or Section 504 Plan)	Recommended
Modified meals must meet CACFP meal patterns	No	Yes

* If disability restricts participant's diet

Determining if Meal Modifications Are Required

Does the child have a physical or mental impairment that meets the definition of **disability** under any of the federal nondiscrimination laws (Section 504, the ADA and ADA Amendments Act, the IDEA, and the USDA's nondiscrimination regulations 7 CFR 15 b)?

YES

NO

Does the physical or mental impairment **restrict the child's diet**?

YES

NO

Did the child's parent/guardian provide a **medical statement** signed by a recognized medical authority that indicates:

- how the child's physical or mental impairment restricts the child's diet;
- an explanation of what must be done to accommodate the child; and
- if appropriate, the food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives?

YES

NO

School or institution is **required** to make a reasonable meal modification

School or institution is **required** to make a reasonable meal modification and must work with child's parent/guardian to obtain a medical statement

School or institution is **not required** to make the meal modification

School or institution is **not required** to make the meal modification

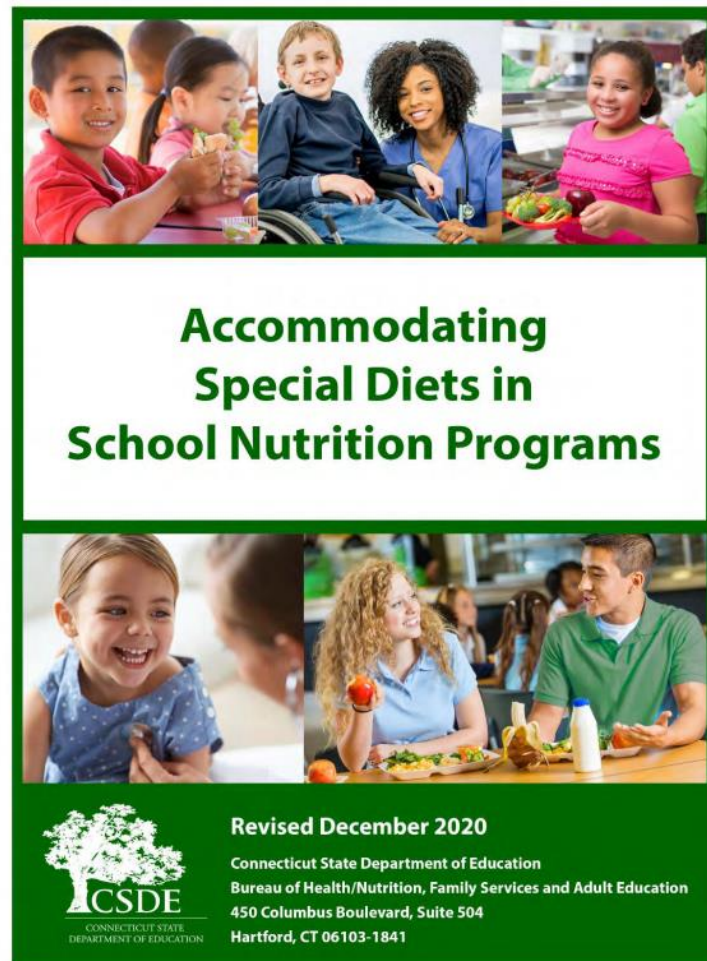
More Resources



CSDE Resource

Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs

- Detailed information and guidance on the federal and state requirements for meal modifications in the USDA's school nutrition programs



<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/SpecDiet/SpecialDietsGuide.pdf>

CSDE Operational Memorandum

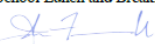
Operational Memorandum No. 13-17 (August 4, 2017) *Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs*



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs

FROM: John D. Frassinelli, Chief 
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

DATE: August 4, 2017

SUBJECT: **Operational Memorandum No. 13-17**
Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs

On April 25, 2017, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued policy memo [SP 26-2017, Accommodating Disabilities in the School Meal Programs: Guidance and Questions and Answers \(Q&As\)](#), as a follow-up to policy memo [SP 59-2016, Policy Memorandum on Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in the School Meal Programs](#). On July 25, 2017, the USDA released the guide, [Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meal Programs](#). These USDA memos and guide significantly change the requirements and process for meal modifications for children with disabilities in the school nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), After-school Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, School Breakfast Program (SBP), Special Milk Program (SMP), and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP).

This operational memorandum provides an overview of the key requirements for meal modifications, including relevant legislation and definitions, and summarizes the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) special diets implementation resources for school food authorities (SFAs). For detailed guidance, review the CSDE's guide, [Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#).

REVISED RESOURCES

The CSDE has recently revised the following documents to reflect the USDA's policy guidance in SP 26-2017 and SP 59-2016:

- [Accommodating Special Dietary Needs in School Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities](#)
- [Medical Statement for Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Guidance and Instructions for the Medical Statement for Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Self-assessment of Local Practices for Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Summary of Requirements for Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#)

Please discard any old versions of these documents and replace with the revised versions. SFAs must carefully review these resources to ensure compliance with the USDA requirements for meal modifications for children with disabilities in the school nutrition programs.

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<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2017/OM13-17.pdf>

USDA Policy Memos

- **USDA Memo SP 26-2017 (April 25, 2017)**
Accommodating Disabilities in the School Meal Programs: Guidance and Q&As

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/accommodating-disabilities-school-meal-programs-guidance-and-qas>

- **USDA Memo SP 59-2016 (September 26, 2016)**
Policy Memorandum on Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in the School Meal Programs

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/policy-memorandum-modifications-accommodate-disabilities-school-meal-programs>

CSDE Resource

Self-assessment of Local Practices for Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs

Self-assessment of Local Practices for Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs

This tool is intended to help local educational agencies (LEAs) assess current practices for meal modifications in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs, and identify areas in need of improvement. The school nutrition programs include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Special Milk Program (SMP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-risk Supper Program implemented in schools.

The USDA's nondiscrimination regulations (7 CFR 15b) and regulations for the school nutrition programs (7 CFR 210.10(m) and 7 CFR 220.8(m)) require reasonable meal modifications for children whose disability restricts their diet, based on documentation from a recognized medical authority. A recognized medical authority is a state-licensed healthcare professional who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law, including physicians, physician assistants, doctors of osteopathy, and advanced practice registered nurses. For information on the requirements for meal modifications, review the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the CSDE's *Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs* webpage.

For children whose dietary restrictions are not related to a disability, LEAs may choose to make optional modifications within the USDA's meal patterns. For information on the meal patterns for school nutrition programs, visit the CSDE's webpages, *Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs*, *Afterschool Snack Program*, and *Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs*; and review the CSDE's guides, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, *Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program*, *School Breakfast Program*, and *Afterschool Snack Program*, and *ASP Handbook*.



Step 1 — Assessment. Check the appropriate box to indicate if each practice is fully implemented, partially implemented, or not implemented by the LEA. Review the LEA's policies, guidelines, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for special diets and meal modifications, including the LEA's food allergy management plan. Check "Not known" if additional information is needed to determine whether the LEA implements the practice.

Federal and state requirements	Implementation			
	Full	Partial	None	Not known
1. The LEA complies with the federal requirements for meal modifications, including the USDA regulations for school meals (7 CFR 210 and 7 CFR 220), USDA nondiscrimination regulations (7 CFR 15b), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the ADA Amendments Act. For more information, review section 1 of the CSDE's guide, <i>Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs</i> .				
2. The LEA makes reasonable meal modifications for children whose disability restricts their diet, based on the medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority. The medical statement identifies: 1) how the child's physical or mental impairment restricts the child's diet; 2) an explanation of what must be done to accommodate the child; and 3) the food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives, if appropriate. Note: The CSDE's form, <i>Medical Statement for Meal Modifications in School Nutrition Programs</i> , is available in English and Spanish in the "Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage.				

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CSDE Webpage

Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs

The screenshot shows the official website of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). The header includes the 'ct.gov' logo and a search bar. The breadcrumb trail reads: HOME / DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION / SPECIAL DIETS IN SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS. The main title is 'Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs'. A left sidebar contains a navigation menu with 'Overview' (highlighted), 'What's Next', 'Documents/Forms', 'Related Resources', 'Laws/Regulations', and 'Contact'. Below the menu, it states 'Provided by: Department of Education'. The main content area has an 'Overview' section with links to 'School Nutrition Programs', 'Program Guidance', 'Forms', 'Resources', and 'Nutrition Education'. The text explains that the CSDE's *Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs* provides information for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Special Milk Program (SMP). It then details requirements for 'Children with a Disability' (requiring medical modifications) and 'Children without a Disability' (allowing meal modifications based on health or preference). A 'CSDE Guidance' section lists five key documents: Allowable Milk Substitutes, Accommodating Special Diets, CSDE Operational Memo No. 13-17, Self-assessment of Local Practices, and Summary of Requirements for Accommodating Special Diets.

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Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs

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Provided by:
Department of Education

Overview

[School Nutrition Programs](#) | [Program Guidance](#) | [Forms](#) | [Resources](#) | [Nutrition Education](#)

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) *Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs* provides information and guidance for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs on providing meals for children with special dietary needs, based on federal laws and USDA regulations. School nutrition programs include the [National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#), [School Breakfast Program \(SBP\)](#), [Afterschool Snack Program \(ASP\)](#) of the NSLP, [Seamless Summer Option \(SSO\)](#) of the NSLP, [Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program \(FFVP\)](#), and [Special Milk Program \(SMP\)](#).

Children with a Disability

The USDA **requires** reasonable meal modifications on a case-by-case basis for children whose disability restricts their diet, based on a medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority. The Connecticut State Department of Public Health defines a recognized medical authority as licensed physicians (doctors of medicine or osteopathy), physician assistants, and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), including nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse anesthetists who are licensed as APRNs.

Children without a Disability

The USDA **allows**, but does not require, meal modifications for children whose special dietary needs do not constitute a disability, including those related to religious or moral convictions, general health concerns, and personal food preferences, such as a preference that a child eats a gluten-free diet because a parent believes it is better for the child. SFAs may choose to make these accommodations on a case-by-case basis. All meal modifications for children without disabilities in grades K-12 must comply with the USDA [meal patterns for grades K-12](#) and all meal modifications for preschoolers without disabilities must comply with the USDA [meal patterns for preschoolers](#).

The CSDE encourages school nutrition programs to develop a written policy and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for special dietary accommodations in school meals. For information on developing policies, click on [What's Next](#) in the left navigation bar.

CSDE Guidance

- [Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities](#)
- [Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#)
- [CSDE Operational Memo No. 13-17](#) : Requirements for Meal Modifications in the School Nutrition Programs
- [Self-assessment of Local Practices for Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Summary of Requirements for Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#)

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Special-Diets-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

USDA Resource

Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meal Programs

USDA-FNS

Accommodating Children with Disabilities in the School Meal Programs

*Guidance for School Food
Service Professionals*



United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service
7/25/2017

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/SP40-2017a1.pdf>

Connecticut General Statute 10-212c: Life-threatening food allergies and glycogen storage disease: Guidelines; district plans

- **CSDE developed guidelines**
- **Board of education must implement a plan for the management of students with life-threatening food allergies and glycogen storage disease, based on CSDE guidelines**

https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_169.htm#sec_10-212

CSDE Resource

Guidelines for Managing Life-threatening Food Allergies in Connecticut Schools

- Includes roles and responsibilities for school nurse and school food service staff



<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Publications/Managing-Life-Threatening-Food-Allergies-in-Connecticut-Schools>

CSDE School Nutrition Programs Staff

County	Consultant
Fairfield County (includes Region 9) Litchfield County (includes Regions 1, 6, 7, 12, and 14)	Fionnuala Brown fionnuala.brown@ct.gov 860-807-2129
Hartford County (includes Region 10) Middlesex County (includes Regions 4, 13, and 17)	Teri Dandeneau teri.dandeneau@ct.gov 860-807-2079
New Haven County (includes Regions 5, 15, and 16) New London County Tolland County (includes Regions 8 and 19) Windham County (includes Region 11)	Susan Alston susan.alston@ct.gov 860-807-2081

For a complete listing of the CSDE's Child Nutrition Programs staff and assignments, review the CSDE's resource, [*Child Nutrition Staff and Responsibilities*](#).

Connecticut State Department of Education
 Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education
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 Hartford, CT 06103-1841

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Levy Gillespie, Equal Employment Opportunity Director/Americans with Disabilities Coordinator (ADA), Connecticut State Department of Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 505, Hartford, CT 06103, 860-807-2071, levy.gillespie@ct.gov.